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Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin

Free to All Visitors to the Museum or by Mail to Any Address

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No. 24

The Administration of the Museum.

AT the quarterly meeting of the Trustees of the Museum held July 18 last, Samuel D. Warren, President of the Museum since January, 1901, informed the Trustees that he would not be a candidate for reelection at the expiration of his present term. At the annual meeting, January 17, Gardiner M. Lane was chosen to succeed Mr. Warren. The following resolutions were passed by the Trustees in view of Mr. Warren's retirement:

Voted: That we here record our grateful appreciation of the devoted service which Mr. Warren has given to the Museum since he became a member of this Board.

Whatever added efficiency the Boston Museum of Fine Arts may acquire by its transfer to enlarged quarters will be in great part due to his foresight and courageous initiative.

He has given his time and strength to the exhaustive consideration of the needs of our collections, and has spared no pains to make sure that the new buildings shall meet every reasonable requirement.

To this end he has initiated and carried out the most thorough study of the difficult problems of Museum arrangement and administration of which we have knowledge.

As a result of these efforts, we believe that an important advance has been made in the science of fine arts exhibition which will be of lasting benefit to ourselves and to other museums both in this country and elsewhere.

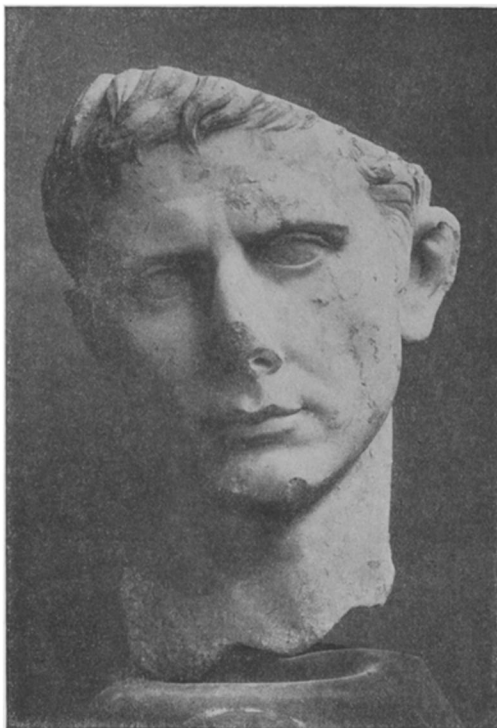
Mr. Lane was appointed a Trustee of the Museum January 18, 1906, and has since served as a member of the Building Committee.

J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., since the same date Temporary Director of the Museum, resigned that position at the annual meeting, having previously notified the Trustees that it would be impossible for him to perform the duties of Director beyond that time. Benjamin Ives Gilman, Secretary of the Museum, was appointed Temporary Director. In accepting Mr. Coolidge's resignation, the Trustees passed the following vote:

Resolved, That the Board wishes to place on record its high appreciation of the services of J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., as Director during the past year, a position which he has filled with marked ability, generosity, and fine civic spirit.

The Committee of the Trustees, to which had been referred the matter of the permanent Directorship, reported at the annual meeting that a number of persons had been under consideration for the position, but that the committee was not yet prepared to name a candidate.

Two Marble Heads of the Emperor Augustus.



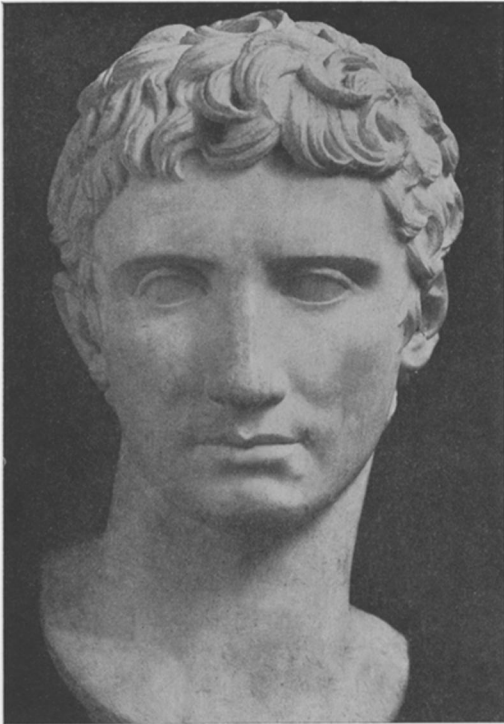
Head of Augustus

Gift of Edward W. Forbes

PROBABLY no man of ancient times was more generally honored by the dedication of portrait statues than the Emperor Augustus, whose diplomatic and military genius, enforced by an indomitable will, restored civil order after a generation of conflict, and imposed the *pax Romana* on the Mediterranean world. In the provinces the Emperor was openly deified, though it is said that he allowed divine honors to himself only in association with the worship of divine Rome. So on the Acropolis at Athens a temple of Roma and Augustus rose under the shadow of the Parthenon; many such were built, we may believe, in the Greek and Asiatic cities of the empire.

The demand for portraits of the Emperor, both at home and abroad, must have been incessant, and, considering the length of his reign and the

benefits it conferred, it is not surprising that more representations of Augustus than of any later Roman emperor have survived. Made during successive stages of his long career, — it may be recalled that he became the leading figure in the Roman state in 44 B. C., and reigned as emperor from 27 B. C. to 14 A. D., — these portraits show



"Despuig" Head of Augustus H. L. Pierce fund

him as a boy, as a young man, and in middle age, at the height of his powers.

To the list of extant portraits must be added one of exceptional interest, which is about to be placed on exhibition in the Greek Marble Room. The Museum is indebted to the generosity of Mr. Edward W. Forbes for this valuable accession to the collection of original classical sculptures. The head, pictured on the preceding page, shows Augustus as a man of mature years. His face has no longer the round outlines of youth; the cheeks are slightly sunken, giving prominence to the cheek bones; lines of age are shaping themselves about the mouth; the vertical wrinkles of the forehead, between the eyes, lightly indicated in the representation of the boy, are here accentuated; the firm chin has become sharp; enough of the nose remains to show its aquiline shape. The attitude of the head is characteristic; it is turned slightly to the right. Suetonius says that the Emperor flattered himself on the awe which his gaze inspired, and was somewhat nettled if any one presumed to face it without blinking. The deep shadow in which the eyes are placed and the contraction of the brow suggest something of the piercing gaze which

the historian mentions. The rendering of the hair in short, pointed locks, somewhat disordered, is common to the authentic likenesses of the Emperor. Although the head has been much injured, the characteristic features reveal the insight of the sculptor and the power of an unusually vigorous and skillful hand.

In its marked but not exaggerated realism the fragment is in interesting contrast to another fine head of Augustus which has been in the Museum for some years — a marble from the Despuig collection at Majorca. This admirably preserved bust is rather an idealization than a portrait. It has been called a youthful Augustus, but appears rather without definite mark of age; it would be natural to present the deified Augustus as ageless, like the gods. The artist has successfully embodied in it some of the essential traits of Augustus' character, but with a certain abstraction which removes it a degree too far from human sympathy.



Coins of Augustus

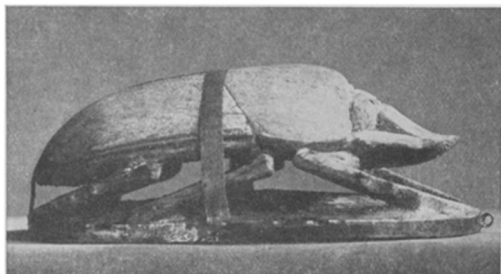
The idealizing method was apparently followed by many of the engravers from whose dies the coins of Augustus were minted. Three silver denarii of his reign and one gold coin (all selected from the Perkins collection) are illustrated here.

It is said that Niebuhr, the historian, could not be easy in a room where there was a portrait of Augustus; he found it cold and repellent. Unattractive as some aspects of the life of Augustus are, the interest of so convincing a portrait as the head presented by Mr. Forbes must be admitted by students of history and of the arts which vivify antiquity. It is the man, not the god, that the sculptor has given us. His faults must have been appreciated by the Roman poets; yet the sense of gratitude, not merely for personal favors, but for the establishment of social order and peace, dictated the enthusiastic "Serus in caelum redeas" of Horace, and Virgil's "deus nobis haec otia fecit."

The Museum is fortunate in possessing this very human presentation of a statesman whose achievements appeared divine to the people whom he governed. It shows the face of a man worn by ambitions and responsibilities, but still resolute in purpose.

S. N. D.

A Scarab of Seti I.



FROM the bequest of Mrs. Martin Brimmer the Museum has recently received a scarab of very unusual size and workmanship, which has been placed on exhibition in the First Egyptian Room, in Case 7, which contains also the earlier Lion-Hunt Scarab of Amenhotep III. The newly installed specimen belongs to the reign of Seti I (circ. 1326-1300 B. C.), in the nineteenth dynasty. It is of a greenish-blue faience and measures 11.3 cms. by 7.8 cms. A very unusual feature, apart from the mere size, is the curious "harness" for suspension shown in the illustrations. This "harness" is of electrum, or "pale gold," and runs, as may be seen from the cut, around the bottom of the object, while a second strip, passing transversely across the back, is joined to a third, running lengthwise along the line of the wing covers. Seen in profile, this scarab impresses the observer by the elevation of the beetle above the base, from which it is raised by its legs, as if in the act of walking. In the majority of these objects base and body



form one solid piece, and were there no other extraordinary features in the Brimmer specimen, the separation of the beetle from the base would alone make it very remarkable.

Nothing is known as to the provenance of this specimen beyond the fact that it was acquired by Mr. Martin Brimmer himself in Egypt a number of years ago. It had evidently been on a mummy, perhaps that of the great Seti I himself,* for when the object was turned over to the Museum by the trustees of the Brimmer estate the whole scarab was covered with bits of cloth such as was used for mummy wrappings.

The face of the scarab was at one time gilded, and traces of gold leaf still adhere to the surface. The face bears, not an inscription, but merely a series of cartouches, eighteen in all. These cartouches bear the name and pre-name of Seti, alternately repeated. The topmost cartouche is



Under side of Scarab Showing Cartouches

supported by two Horus-hawks, while a pair of *ankhs* (*cruces ansatae*) are used as flanking ornaments at the ends of the last line. The segment of a circle at the bottom of the field may be taken to be the hieroglyph *nebu*, "lord," "master."

Seti I was one of the greatest monarchs of antiquity. His monuments are found from Palestine to Nubia, and the temple at Karnak was most enlarged by him. On the north wall of the hypostyle court of that edifice are a number of scenes representing the victories of the king, who was, like his son Rameses II, a famous conqueror. In the Brimmer scarab the Museum possesses a beautiful memorial of this once powerful ruler. In size, condition, and workmanship, it is perhaps the most remarkable specimen of this class of objects in the world.

O. B.

* This mummy is now in Cairo; for its curious history see Petrie, *Hist. Egypt*, III, p. 23-4.